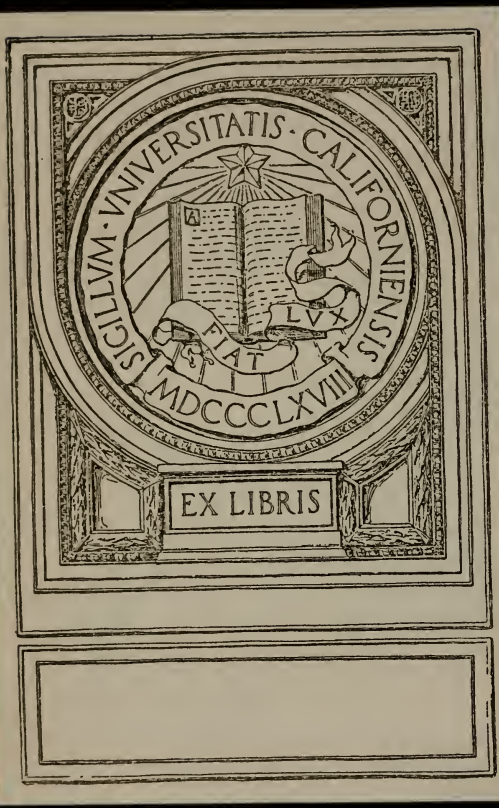
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SELECT EXTRACTS

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FLORENTINE LIFE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

BY

ESTHER G. ROPER, B.A.

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
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1920

INTRODUCTION

As the history of Florence in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is the story of the evolution of government based on commerce and industry, and of the guilds through which these were carried on, so the history of the succeeding century is that of a community through whose institutions life is ceasing to flow—the place once taken by institutions is now being taken by individuals. It is true that many of the artists and sculptors who flourished under Lorenzo de' Medici were trained in the workshops of members of the guilds, but later on Lorenzo found it necessary to establish a school of sculptors in the gardens of the Medici Palace. Long before that Dante and Petrarch, Boccaccio and Sacchetti, had made the name of Florence famous as the home of art and letters. To Florence came (in 1397) the first real teacher of Greek in Italy, Manuel Chrysoloras; he was followed by several of his compatriots, most of whom came to Italy between 1400 and the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Thus Greek learning spread widely. Florence had its famous Platonic Academy, founded by Cosimo de' Medici, who, it should be remembered, also founded the monastery of St. Mark's. The commerce of the city was international: its warehouses and banks were to be found in every Italian state, in France, Germany, England, Flanders, and the Levant; books and MSS. were carried from country to country along with the cloths and silks of Florence and the raw

materials, spices, drugs, and jewels of the East. It was the age of the universal in thought and life. Pico della Mirandola expressed it in religion when he said in his "Oration on the Dignity of Man": "Thou bearest in thee the germs of a universal life." It is this universality that is so marked in the genius of Leonardo da Vinci, Leone Battista Alberti, and others. Of their knowledge in all branches it is true to say that "which of them soever he had considered, in him ye would have thought that he had taken that one for his only study."

Merchants and craftsmen were scholars and poets too. The women there, as elsewhere in Italy, were renowned for their learning and accomplishments: Alessandra Scala, the daughter of the Secretary of the Florentine Republic, was distinguished not only for her beauty, but even more for her attainments. At an early age she wrote not only Latin, but Greek also, and some of her Greek poems appeared in Poliziano's works.

Cassandra Fideles, a correspondent of Lorenzo's, was reputed to be among the first scholars of the age.

Lucrezia de' Medici was a writer of "lauds, sonnets, and poems in *terza rima*." The family of the Medici grew famous as the bankers of kings and Popes as well as of the Florentine merchants; their representatives were known in every Court, and were treated with the honour paid to ambassadors. Cosimo himself was sent by his father in the train of the Pope John XXII. as the bank's representative at the Council of Constance (1414).

Lorenzo, when going to study the political conditions of Milan, Venice, etc., at the age of seventeen, was told by Cosimo: "Thou art to follow the advice of Pigello (manager of the Medici Bank at Milan) and his written instructions." Lorenzo, as one of the partners of the bank, lent 100,000 ducats to the Pope, and the Duke of Ferrara guaranteed repayment of a loan from the bank on the salt mines of Modena. The Medici of the fifteenth century were not

princes; Lorenzo held no public office, he only "took charge of the city and of the State as his grandfather and father had done." When, after his death, and the expulsion of his son Piero, Savonarola established a theocracy in Florence, he who had protested against the "tyrant" himself "took charge of the city" in precisely the same way. There was much that was wrong in the life of Florence—the lust of territory, the indifference to the horrors of war, cruelty, slavery, violence, and the like; and these things led to the downfall of the city. But in spite of all there was beauty in art and life, truth and simplicity in religion. She counted among her citizens incomparable artists, sculptors, writers, thinkers, and teachers, and to their life and work we still look back with amazement and delight.

My thanks are due to the following publishers for their kind permission to include certain passages: to Messrs. Bell and Sons for the use of extracts from Mr. MacCurdy's *Leonardo da Vinci* and Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici;* to Messrs. Dent and Sons for the use of extracts from Machiavelli's *Florentine History;* to Messrs. Duckworth and Co. for the use of an extract from Mr. MacCurdy's edition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Notebooks;* to Messrs. Macmillan and Co. for permission to include a passage from Mrs. Oliphant's *Makers of Florence*, and to Messrs. Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., for a similar permission with respect to the *First Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci;* to the Walter Scott Publishing Co. for the use of several extracts from their edition of Vasari's *Italian Painters;* and, lastly, to Mrs. Janet Ross and her publishers, Messrs. Chatto and Windus, for the generous permission to use any desired extracts from her *Lives of the Early Medici.*

E. G. ROPER.

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1. Country Life *cir.* A.D. 1400.

[*Del Governo della Famiglia*, by Agnolo Pandolfini (?), quoted by Mrs. Oliphant in *Makers of Florence*, ed. 1883, p. 167.]

Here he had a most worthy house, full of everything necessary to the condition of a man of gentle blood—dogs hawks, and every kind of nets both for fishing and birding. In this house all guests were received honourably. He was very liberal, and there being no other house near Florence of such quality and so well regulated, all the great personages who came were lodged there. There he received Pope Eugenius, King Rinieri, Duke Francesco, often the Marchese Niccolo, and many other great people; and the house was always so well provided that nothing was wanting. When it happened that on a *festa* or other day his children came from Florence to visit him without bringing other guests, he complained and reproved them. The house was a habitation of well-doing; and Agnolo was in his time another Lucullus, having his dwelling furnished with every kind of poultry and provision for guests, to do honour to those who came. When it happened that there were no visitors in the house after a great hawking he sent to the road to see if anyone passed that way, and gave orders to bring in all wayfarers to dinner. When they reached the house, water was given them to wash their hands, and dinner was served; after which, when they had eaten, he thanked them, and said that they were free to go—that he did not wish to hinder their journey.

2. Entrance of the Pope (Martin V.) into Florence, where he was received by the Gonfaloniere and a Procession of Citizens, 1418.

"Istorie di Giovanni Cambi," in *Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani*, vol. ii., p. 140. Florence, 1785.]

And there were the magnificent Signoria with their colleges and all the magistrates of Florence and the six councillors of the merchants and the Consuls of all the Guilds and all the noble citizens of Florence, all clothed in the best that they had, a magnificent sight to see, with garlands of olive on their heads and with a standard of cloth of gold lined with sable . . . then came a hundred young men dressed in cloth, each carrying a wax candle, ten pounds in weight, in his hand; next came the Cardinals, and after them a mule with a beautifully ornamented casket on its back, and inside the casket the *Corpus Domini*. Then followed the Pope under a standard of brocade borne by the colleges . . . and as they entered the city they found the whole gate was opened and the portcullis was entirely taken away—a thing that had never been the custom to do for holy Popes or Emperors, and without any noise but with much devotion the procession passed straight through the Borgo San Lorenzo, and the Pope dismounted at the Cathedral at a platform covered with carpet, at the foot of the steps.

From there he went on foot, upon white woollen cloth, right up to the high altar; and having there made the proper reverences and ceremonies he remounted his horse and passing by the street of the Balestrieri . . . and the Piazza of the Signoria, and the Porta Santa Maria, and the Borgo Sant' Apostoli, and the houses of the Spini, and the Tornaquinci, dismounted at Santa Maria Novella, accompanied by those mentioned above. Behind him was a bishop, who kept throwing round as he went a number of small coins for the sake of appearing grand, also to prevent the people from crowding so much; the Pope got off his horse and went to rest, for he was very tired.

And the Pope's mace-bearers took possession of the standards of the captain of the Guelf party and the canopy which the Signoria had held over the Pope, and over the *Corpus Domini*.

And the rulers decided that the Cathedral funds should pay one thousand five hundred golden florins to the friars of Santa Maria Novella, to prepare an apartment fit to receive such a Pope. And so there was built in the second cloister a large hall with other living-rooms and they put the arms of the city over them and those of the Woollen Workers' Guild below, as may be seen to this day [1511]. And to all the Cardinals our magnificent Signoria made a present, confectionery, wine, wax, meal, and game to the value of fifty golden florins for each one of them, as has been said, and there were nineteen Cardinals that day round the Pope at the high altar of Santa Maria Novella.

3. Giovanni de' Medici and the Catasto (Tax), 1427.

[Machiavelli: *History of Florence*, Book IV., "Everyman" edition, pp. 150, 151.]

Messer Rinaldo degli Albizzi addressed the meeting. He described the condition of affairs, how by their own negligence the city had drifted into the hands of the plebeians, and how it had before been recovered by their fathers in 1381. He recalled to their memory that iniquitous government which had ruled from 1377 to 1381; all those who were present had fathers or grandfathers who had suffered death under it, and the same perils would recur if such a government were to return to power. Already the mob had imposed such taxes as best suited it, and soon would be creating magistrates in its own interests, if it were not stopped by force or law. When this should happen the mob would take their place, and the government which for forty-two years had ruled the city with so much glory would be destroyed. Then Florence would either be governed by the will of a licentious mob or

another danger would arise—a government under the dominion of one man, who would be made a prince over them. Therefore he declared that every man who loved his country and his own honour was bound to rise; he recalled to their memory the valour of Bardo Mancini, who rescued the city from its dangers by the destruction of the Alberti. The perils which were now imminent were caused by the wide franchises, which emboldened the multitude to fill the palace with contemptible and unknown persons, and this again was caused by their own negligence. He concluded by saying that the only plan he could see to remedy this was to restore the government to the grandees, take away all power from the smaller guilds, and reduce their number from fourteen to seven. This would give the plebeians less power in the council by the decrease in their number, and at the same time increase the authority of the grandees, who owing to their ancient hostility to the plebeians might be relied upon to thwart them. . . . Everybody present approved the advice of Messer Rinaldo, and he was much praised for it. Nicolo da Usano, among others, said that everything which Messer Rinaldo had said was true, and his remedies good and sure, if they could be carried into effect without dividing the city, but this could only be done by bringing Messer Giovanni de' Medici into their plans. When they had secured him, the populace, deprived of its leader, would lose much of its power to do harm. But should this not be accomplished, then they would be unable to effect their desires without arms, and recourse to arms he believed to be dangerous, either by failure to win or ability to enjoy the fruits of victory. He modestly brought to their recollection his past warnings, and their failure to deal with these troubles when it would have been easy to do so. But now that time had passed, and it could only be done at great hazard; there remained indeed no other recourse but to gain over Messer Giovanni. . . .

To this Giovanni replied that he considered it to be the duty of a good and prudent citizen not to change the accustomed ordinances of his city; that nothing injures so much as frequent changes. . . . Giovanni therefore urged Messer Rinaldo to reconsider his decision and rather imitate his father, who, in order to earn the goodwill of the people, reduced the price of salt, proposed that all whose taxes amounted to less than half a florin should be allowed to pay them or not as they wished, and that on such days as the council met all persons should be secure from their creditors. Giovanni finally said that, as far as he was concerned, he advocated leaving the city to enjoy its present ordinances. . . .

This war[1] lasted from 1422 to 1427, and the citizens of Florence were greatly displeased with the manner in which the taxes had been imposed up to that time and determined to have them levied in some new way. In order to proportion the taxes to a man's property it was decreed that every man should pay at the rate of half a florin on every one hundred florins' worth of property. The public authorities were to levy this tax, and not individuals, and thus it fell heavily upon the richer citizens. It was, however, fiercely contested before it passed into law. The only gentleman who recommended it was Giovanni de' Medici, and by his voice it was carried. And as in levying this tax it fell upon the possessions of every citizen it was called the "Catasto." This system of taxation in some degree checked the tyranny of the upper classes, because they were not able to browbeat the plebeians and with threats make them be silent at the council, as they formerly did. Thus it followed that whilst this taxation was approved by the generality of men, it was regarded with great displeasure by the rich. Moreover, as often happens, men will not rest content with what they have obtained, but will desire something further;

[1] *I.e.*, against Filippo Visconti.

so the people in this case, not content with the equality of this system of taxation, demanded that the law should have a retrospective effect, in order that the affairs of the rich should be investigated with a view to discover who among them had paid less than his catasto, and that they should now be made to pay up, so that their contributions should equal the payments of those citizens who in past times had been compelled to sell their possessions to enable them to pay taxes which they ought not to have been called upon to pay. This demand angered the rich classes more than the catasto had done, and they condemned it on every opportunity. They contended it was most unjust to tax movable goods, because they might be possessed one day and lost the next; besides which many men had money hidden away which the catasto could not touch. Then again, those who left their business in order to assist in governing the Republic ought to be less burthened, for it was surely enough for them to give their services to it, and it was not just that the Republic should claim their property as well as enjoy their labours, whilst it only claimed the money of others. Those citizens who were advocates of the catasto rejoined that when the movable property varied then the tax would vary also, and if there were many variations means would be found to remedy any injustice. It was not worth while to take account of hidden money, because if money was not fructifying it was not reasonable to tax it, and if it came into circulation it would at once be discovered. If it did not please men to work for the Republic, then let them leave it to others; this would make no difference, because there were plenty of patriotic citizens to be found who were ready enough to assist the Republic, not only with their counsel, but also with their money. Besides which there were many advantages and honours attaching to the office of rulers which ought to be sufficient without men desiring to shirk the burdens. The opponents to the tax, however,

had not disclosed the real reason of their opposition, which was that the rich could no longer wage war without paying for it, or having to share its burdens with other citizens. If this system of taxation had been in effect before, Florence would have had no war with King Ladislao, nor would there have been the present one with the Duke Filippo, neither of which was necessary, but were undertaken in order to fill the pockets of the rich. These controversies were checked by Giovanni de' Medici, who pointed out that it was not wise to go back on past events, for wisdom consists in learning how to provide for the future. If taxes had formerly been levied unjustly, let them now thank God that a way had been found by which they could be levied with justice. Let everyone aim at making this a means of reuniting the city, and not of dividing it, as would be the case if the back taxes were enforced on a basis equal to the present. The man who is moderate in victory always chooses the better part, for it often happens that those who insist upon having all will end the losers. . . .

4. Oration of Cosimo de' Medici to the Signory on being exiled by them, 1433.

[Quoted in *Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 21.]

If I thought that this my misfortune and terrible ruin might serve to bring peace to this blessed people, not only would exile be acceptable, but I should even welcome death, if I were sure that my descendants, O Signori, might pride themselves on my having been the cause of the wished-for union of your Republic. As you have decided that I am to go to Padua, I declare that I am content to go, and to stay wherever you command, not only in the Trevisian State, but should you send me to live among the Arabs, or any other people alien to our customs, I would go most willingly. . . . I know, and this is no small comfort to me, that I never permitted wrong to be done to anyone.

I never frequented the Palace save when I was summoned; I never aroused hatred of the Republic amongst your subalterns because I never ill-treated them; I always declined to be nominated an official, which is often prejudicial to the body and hurtful to the soul. With no small pride I affirm that none can say my ill-behaviour ever caused a city to rebel or to be taken from you. On the contrary, our money bought several. Ask your soldiers how many times they were paid by me for the Commune with my own money, to be returned to me when convenient to the Commune. Never have I been found wanting when the Commune could be enlarged, and although I am exiled, I shall ever be ready at the call of this people. In conclusion, O. Signori, I pray God to keep you in His grace and in happiness in this fortunate Republic, and to give me patience to hear my unhappy life.[1]

5. Cosimo de' Medici to the Reverend Master Marsilio Ficino, Platonist.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 73.]

Yesterday I came to the Villa of Careggi, not to cultivate my fields but my soul. Come to us, Marsilio, as soon as possible. Bring with thee our Plato's book, *De Summo Bono*. This, I suppose, you have already translated from the Greek language into Latin as you promised. I desire nothing so much as to know the best road to happiness. Farewell, and do not come without the Orphean lyre.

6. Luca Pitti.

[Machiavelli: *History of Florence*, "Everyman" edition, pp. 276, 277.]

This government lasted eight years and was harsh, oppressive, and violent. This was owing largely to the fact that Cosimo, old and weary, and weakened also by sickness, could no longer give the necessary attention to

[1] Cosimo was recalled the following year.

public affairs, and a few strong men were allowed to prey upon the rest. Luca Pitti was rewarded with a knighthood for his service to the Republic, and he, not wishing to be behindhand in gratitude towards those who had honoured him, elevated those who had previously been called priors of trade to the dignity of priors of liberty, so that having lost the reality they should retain the name. He decreed also that, whereas the gonfaloniere had previously sat on the right hand of the governors, he should now sit in their midst. And as it appeared to Luca that God had taken a large share in his enterprise, he ordained public processions and solemn ceremonies for the presentation of thanks to God for the restoration of their honours. Messer Luca was richly paid by both the Signoria and Cosimo, and after these had given him great presents, the city, not to be outdone, did the same, and it was generally believed that these presents amounted to 20,000 ducats. By these means he rose to such a high reputation that it was no longer Cosimo who governed Florence but Luca. This inspired him with so much confidence that he began to build two great houses, one in Florence and the other in Ruciano, situate about a mile out of the city, both of them on a superb and regal scale. He neglected no means, however extraordinary, to bring these palaces to a completion, for not only did his friends and the citizens bring him presents, and assist him with materials for the buildings, but the municipality came to his aid. Beyond this, bandits and other men who had incurred the penalties of the law for murders, robberies, or other crimes, could always find a safe refuge in those buildings, if they were persons who could be made useful there. Other citizens, who were not building as he was, were no less violent in their methods, so that although Florence was not desolated by war she was robbed by her own citizens. . . :

7. Piero de' Medici to his son Lorenzo at Milan (aged 17), 1465.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 93.]

Thou hast arrived at Milan later than I thought, and perhaps than thou didst wish, on account of the delay caused by the honours paid thee by the Duke at Ferrara. I have written to thank him, and to say we are his debtors, and also to Messer Giovauni Bentivoglio I have sent thanks, etc.

Thou art to follow the advice of Pigello[1] and his written instructions; be careful not to worry the Duke, he will have enough of that with this marriage.[2] Thou art to consider thyself as the servant and as belonging to the household of His Excellency, and to ask Pigello's advice as to what visits to pay, and what to say. Remember to be civil and alert; act as a man and not as a boy.

Show sense, industry, and manly endeavour, so that thou mayest be employed in more important things, for this journey is the touchstone of thy abilities. I have sent by carrier the rest of the silver [plate] to Pigello, but have not yet heard of its arrival.

If thou needst aught else let me know, but Pigello will provide all that is necessary, consult with him about inviting Don Federigo one day to the house there or anything else thou thinkest needful. Arrange with him after due reflection, and whatever is settled do with splendour and in honourable fashion. Gugliemo,[3] thou, and Pigello can settle together, and whatever is decided will please me, only, as I said, do not stint money, but do thyself honour. When thou hast time, after having paid thy visits, commend me to the Duke and to Madonna, to Count Galeazzo and to whoso else thou thinkest right. Amuse

[1] Manager of the Medici Bank at Milan.

[2] Ippolita Maria, daughter of Francesco Sforza, was married by proxy to the Duke of Calabria, eldest son of King Ferrante of Naples.

[3] Gugliemo de' Pazzi, husband of Piero's daughter Bianca.

thyself and do not worry about us here, the time will come soon enough when thou wilt have to do so. Nannina is well again; we will talk of her marriage after thy return from Naples. Gugliemo's family are all well; tell him not to forget them entirely, and be not so taken up with all those festivities as to forget thyself. I think thou hast better leave there a few days before the others, because as I have Madonna the Princess here in our house, and Gugliemo and thyself being absent, I shall be as a man without hands, but of this I will write later. No more at present. Christ guard thee.

FLORENCE, *May* 4, 1465.

8. ST. ANTONINO, ARCHBISHOP OF FLORENCE.

[*Vita di Sant' Antonino scritta da Vespasiano*, Firenze, 1859, p. 9.]

The income of the archbishopric at this time (1446) was 1,500 crowns. He only took sufficient for the bare necessities of the house, which was 500 florins, thus leaving 1,000. This he gave to the poor and wretched, for the love of God. He put his court in order, prohibiting not only all that was simony, but even all on which there was the mere shadow of simony. . . . It happened that in his time there was a great famine in Florence and a great crowd of poor people both in Florence and in the country round. For them he ordered large quantities of bread to be made. He chose certain persons to arrange for almsgiving, and he destined this to be not only for those whom everyone knew to be poor, but also for those who were too proud to admit publicly their poverty, he provided all their necessities secretly. And this company, which still exists in Florence, was instituted by him [Buonuomini di San Martino].

9. PIERO DE' MEDICI.

[*Ammirato*, Book XXIII., vol. v., p. 185.]

Piero was a humane man, of a kindly disposition, and in all the changes which befell the Republic in his days

it was owing to his good feeling that his supporters did not stain their hands with the blood of their fellow-citizens, as they badly wished to do. He did not lack experience or keenness of mind, but illness when it lasts long weakens not only the body but the intellect. And his reputation suffered from coming between a father and a son, the brilliance of whose glory could not but dim all other lights. He was carried to his grave, so far as I can learn, without many signs of honour, either because he himself had in his lifetime decreed this, or because this would only have excited envy against his successors, to whom the reality and not the appearance of power was important.

10. Ricordi of Lorenzo the Magnificent.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 154.]

The second day after his death, although I, Lorenzo, was very young, being twenty years of age [1469], the principal men of the city and of the state came to us in our house to condole with us on our loss and to encourage me to take charge of the city and of the state, as my grandfather and my father had done. This I did, though on account of my youth and the great responsibility and perils arising therefrom, with great reluctance, solely for the safety of our friends and our possessions. For it is ill living in Florence for the rich unless they rule the state. Till now we have succeeded with honour and renown, which I attribute not to prudence, but to the grace of God and the good conduct of my predecessors.

11. Marsilio Ficino to the noble Lorenzo de' Medici.

[Description of Cosimo de' Medici : *Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 76.]

I, my Lorenzo, for more than twelve years gave myself up to philosophy with him. He was as acute in reasoning as he was prudent and strong in governing. Certainly I owe much to Plato, but must confess that I owe no less

to Cosimo, inasmuch as Plato only once showed me the idea of courage. Cosimo showed it me every day. For the moment I will not mention his other qualities. Cosimo was as avaricious and careful of time as Midas of money; he spent his days parsimoniously, carefully counting every hour and avariciously saving every second; he often lamented the loss of hours. Finally, having like Solon the philosopher (even when occupied in most serious business), diligently studied philosophy, yet even till the last day when he departed from this world of shadows to go to light, he devoted himself to the acquisition of knowledge.

12. Agnolo Poliziano [aged 16] to Lorenzo de' Medici.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 156.]

Magnificent Lorenzo, to whom Heaven has given charge of the city and the state, first citizen of Florence, doubly crowned with bays lately for war in S. Croce amid the acclamations of the people [alluding to the tournament] and for poetry on account of the sweetness of your verses, give ear to me, who drinking at Greek sources am striving to set Homer into Latin metre. This second book which I have translated (you know we have the first by Messer Carlo d'Arezzo) comes to you and timidly crosses your threshold. If you welcome it I propose to offer you all the *Iliad*. It rests with you, who can, to help the poet. I desire no other muse or other gods but only you; by your help I can do that of which the ancients would not have been ashamed. May it please you therefore at your leisure to give audience to Homer. The young translator, if assailed by a Zoïlus, commends himself to you.

Your servant,

1470. Agnolo Poliziano.[1]

[1] Lorenzo, after this, provided for his education, and he became one of his most intimate friends and tutor to his children, a great scholar and writer.

13. Piero de' Medici [aged 7] to his Father, Lorenzo.

[The original is in Latin. *Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 217.]

Magnificent father, Lucrezia and I are trying who can write best. She writes to grandmother Lucrezia, I, my father, to you. The one who obtains what he asks for will win. Till now Lucrezia has had all she wished for. I, who have always written in Latin in order to give a more literary tone to my letters, have not yet had that pony you promised me; so that I am laughed at by all. See to it, therefore, your Magnificence, that she should not always be the winner. The war as far as I understand goes in our favour this year, but we do not quite understand how the sword that wounded us is to be broken if only the sheath is hit. For if the enemy makes war on us even outside his own country, on what does he rely for again attacking us another year when tired out? We only hope for peace through victory. Scipio is to be driven to Carthage in order to get Hannibal out of Italy. We beseech you, we, your children, to have the more care for yourself the more you see that the enemy rather lays hidden snares than dares open warfare.

I commend Martino to you, who aids me not to forget my Greek and to improve my Latin. . . .—Your son,

May 26, 1479. Piero.

14. Filippo Strozzi's Account of the attempted Murder of Lorenzo and Giuliano in the Cathedral, April 26, 1478.

[Quoted in *Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 190.]

At the words *missa est* Ser Stefano da Bagnone, secretary of Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi and Messer Antonio Maffei of Volterra, assailed Lorenzo de' Medici, while Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini fell upon Giuliano.

Both were walking round the choir outside, and Lorenzo at once understood, drew his sword, leaped into the choir, rushed across in front of the altar, entered the new sacristry, and ordered the door to be locked. There he remained until aid came from his house. He was only wounded in the neck and in a few days was well.

Francesco de' Pazzi and Bernardo Bandini sprang at Giuliano, who was walking in front of the chapel of the cross, and with ten or twelve blows laid him dead on the pavement; they also killed Francesco Nori, who was with him.

The uproar was great in the church. I was there talking with Messer Bongianni and the other gentlemen and we were all struck with astonishment, people flying now here, now there, while the church resounded with loud shouts, and arms were seen in the hands of partisans of the Pazzi who had joined in this matter.

The Cardinal was left all alone by the side of the altar, until some priests came and led him into the old sacristy, where he remained till two of the Eight with many soldiers arrived and took him to the Palace. . . .

15. Perugino (*b.* 1446) on Florence.

[*Lives of Italian Painters*, by Giorgio Vasari. Selected and prefaced by Havelock Ellis. Pp. 110-11.]

The boy [Pietro Perugino] would thus often inquire of such persons as he knew to have seen the world, in what city the best artists were formed? This question he addressed more particularly to his instructor, from whom he constantly received the same reply, namely, that Florence was the place, above all others, wherein men attain to perfection in all the arts, but more especially in painting. And to this, he said, they were impelled by three causes: first, by the censure freely expressed by so many persons and in such various modes, for the air of that city gives a natural quickness and freedom to the perceptions of men, so that they cannot content themselves

with mediocrity in the works presented to them, which they always judge with reference to the honour of the good and beautiful in art, rather than with respect to, or consideration for, the man who has produced them: next, that, to obtain the means of life in Florence, a man must be industrious, which is as much as to say that he must keep his skill and judgment in perpetual activity, must be ever ready and rapid in his proceedings; must know, in short, how to gain money, seeing that Florence, not having a rich and abundant domain around her, cannot supply the means of life to those who abide within her walls, at light cost, as can be done in countries where produce abounds largely. The third cause, which is, perhaps, not less effectual than the other two, is the desire for glory and honour, which is powerfully generated by the air of that place, in the men of every profession, and whereby all who possess talent are impelled to struggle, that they may not remain in the same grade with those whom they perceive to be only men like themselves (much less will any consent to remain behind another), even though they may acknowledge such to be indeed Masters; but all labour by every means to be foremost, insomuch that some desire their own exaltation so eagerly as to become thankless for benefits, censorious of their competitors, and, in many ways, evil-minded, unless that effect be prevented by natural excellence and sense of justice.

16. Pier Filippo Pandolfini, Florentine Ambassador at Rome, to Lorenzo de' Medici.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 325.]

Monsignor d' Arles told me yesterday morning that the Signoria of Venice and all the Venetian gentlemen are very irate with us for two things. First, because, according to them, we tried through the Soldan to prevent that journey of theirs.

Secondly, on account of the agreement about wool from

England, which they have so much at heart that they could not be more angry and are decided to upset it at any cost. They have ordered that all ships carrying wool to Pisa, no matter to whom they belong, are to be prevented from loading in Candia, Cyprus, or any other place where they have ports, and that no ship of theirs is to touch at Porto Pisano. I do not know whether it would be good to inform Tommaso Portinari so that he might tell the King of England and explain to him the harm which this decision will do to H.M. and to his subjects, and that the Venetians want to be masters and dictate laws to them

17. Lorenzo's Letter to the Duke Ercole d' Este.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 244.]

Illustrissime Domine mi,

Although in tears and in great grief, I cannot but inform your Excellency of the terrible loss I have sustained by the death of my most dear mother, Madonna Lucrezia, who to-day quitted this life. I am more full of sorrow than I can say, as besides losing a mother, at the mere thought of whom my heart breaks, I have lost the counsellor who took many a burden from off me. It has pleased God that this should be and we neither can nor ought to contest His will. . . .

Laurentius de Medicis.

Florence, *March* 25, 1482.

Lucrezia.

[Luigi Pulci's "Rime."]

Con la tua grazia, Vergine Maria,
Conserva la devota alma e verace,
Monna Lucrezia, tua benigna e pia,
Con carità perfetta e vera pace.

[Of thy grace, Holy Virgin, preserve that devoted spirit and true, Monna Lucrezia, blessed and kind, gifted with perfect love and of true tranquillity.]

18. A Manager of the Medici Bank to the Duke Ercole d' Este.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 309.]

To the Illustrious Duke Ercole, etc.

According to the usual custom and rule we advise you that to-day the Magnificent Lorenzo has lent Pope Innocent 100,000 ducats for a year; one-third in cash, one-third in silk goods, and one-third in woollen cloth. As surety he has two-tenths on the stipends of all newly appointed priests, 70,000 ducats, and for the rest he will hold Città di Castello until entirely repaid. I give you another piece of news: Pope Innocent has given the Magnificent Lorenzo 30,000 cantara of alum at 1 ducat the cantaro as payment of what was owing to him by Pope Sixtus, the 40,000 he received for the war, which is good news.—Your servant and particular partisan,

B. Des. of the Medici Bank.

Florence, 1489.

19. Messer Guidone Aldrovandini, Ambassador of Ferrara to the Republic of Florence, to the Duke Ercole d' Este.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 277.]

This evening about 24 of the clock came the letter of your Illustrious Lordship. I went at once to the Magnificent Lorenzo and read him the whole letter entreating him in your Excellency's name to keep it absolutely secret. When his Magnificence heard it I assure your Lordship that he remained for a time without opening his lips from agony and rage, and then said, "I believe all that is evil of this Pope, the more so that to-day I heard from Rome that S. Piero in Vincula is going to Padua on the pretence of fulfilling a vow, but really in order to conclude a league with the Venetians and settle everything."

Then he added, "This ecclesiastical state has always

been the ruin of Italy, because being ignorant and not knowing how to govern, the priests put the whole world in peril. If His Majesty puts an end to the Barons, he will then teach the Pope to read." About the news that Signor Roberto was to lead the Genoese against him, etc., he did not seem to care much, or to hold them in much estimation, saying that they would need other men than the crews of galleys. He then said, "If Signor Roberto is to be the instrument of this it is not serious."[1] By these words I gathered that His Magnificence did not greatly fear Signor Roberto on account of the friendship existing between them and that he meant, according to my poor judgment, that Signor Roberto would not make war on Florence; though he did not express himself clearly.

FLORENCE, *November* 20, 1486.

20. TO THE SIGNORIA OF FLORENCE FROM LORENZO DE' MEDICI (WRITTEN AFTER HE HAD STARTED FOR NAPLES).

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 229.]

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS MY LORDS,

It is not from presumption that I did not notify the reason of my departure to Your Illustrious Excellencies, but because it seemed to me that the agitated and disturbed condition of our city demands acts and not words. I conceive that she desires, and indeed has extreme need of, peace. Seeing that all other endeavours have been fruitless, I have determined to run some peril in my own person rather than expose the city to disaster. Therefore, with the permission of Your Excellencies of the Signoria, I have decided to go openly to Naples. Being the one most hated

[1] The King and barons of Naples were at war with one another, 1485. The King took prisoner the Count of Montorio. Aquila appealed to Pope Innocent. He took their side and appointed Roberto di Sanseverino as his General. Florence took Naples' side; Venice and Genoa the Pope's. The ensuing war brought nothing but suffering and destruction to people in the districts of Naples and Rome.

and persecuted by our enemies, I may by placing myself in their hands be the means of restoring peace to our city. One of two things is certain: either His Majesty the King loves our city as he has asserted and some have believed, and is attempting to gain our friendship by affronting us rather than by despoiling us of liberty; or His Majesty really desires the ruin of this Republic. If his intentions are good there is no better way of testing them than by placing myself voluntarily in his power, and I make bold to say that this is the only way to make peace and to render the condition of our city stable. If His Majesty the King intends to attack our liberty it seems to me well to know the worst quickly, and that one should be injured rather than the many. I am most glad to be that one, for two reasons: first, because being the principal object of our enemies' hatred I can more easily and better explain all to the King, as it may be that our enemies only seek to injure me. The other reason is that having a greater position and larger stake in our city, not only than I deserve, but probably than any citizen in our days, I am more bound than any other man to give up all to my country, even my life. These are the feelings with which I go, for perchance our Lord God desires that this war, which began with the blood of my brother and my own, should be put an end to by me. My ardent wish is that either my life or my death, my misfortunes or my well-being, should contribute to the good of our city. I shall therefore carry out my idea.

If it succeeds according to my wishes and hopes I shall be most glad to benefit my country at the risk of my life and at the same time to save myself. Should evil befall me I shall not complain if it benefits our city as it certainly must: for if our adversaries only aim at me, they will have me in their hands; if they want aught else, it will be patent to all. I am certain that our citizens will unite to protect their liberty, so that by the grace of God

it will be defended as was always done by our fathers. I go full of hope, and with no other object than the good of the city, and I pray God to give me grace to perform what is the duty of every man towards his country. I commend myself humbly to Your Excellencies of the Signoria.—Your Excellencies' servant,

LAURENTIUS DE MEDICIS.

From SAN MINIATO, on the *7th of December*, 1479.

21. VISIT OF GIOVANNI GALEAZZO, DUKE OF MILAN, TO FLORENCE IN 1471.

[*Ammirato*, Book XXIII., vol. v., p. 188, Florence, 1848.]

When Gino Capponi, son of Neri, was Gonfalonier, there came to Florence, in pursuance of a vow, the Duke Giovanni Galeazzo accompanied by his wife and a magnificent retinue. He was lodged by Lorenzo de' Medici at his private expense; the other gentlemen and courtiers who followed him were entertained and assigned rooms and houses at the public expense, by the Signory.

This prince was indeed very magnificent at home, so that those who tell the story of his arrival at Florence speak of the wonders of his grandeur. Among other things he had carried on mules over the Alps twelve litters for the service of his duchess and her ladies. They had covers of cloth of gold, elegantly embroidered in silver, besides fifty most beautiful hackneys led by hand, for his wife's personal use, and fifty great chargers for himself, with saddles of cloth of gold, and other rich trappings; a hundred men-at-arms and five hundred infantry for his escort, fifty grooms in cloth of silver and in silk to hold the stirrup, five hundred couples of dogs, and an infinite number of falcons and hawks, to be used in hunting and fowling.

This pomp was imitated by the courtiers and nobles, all of whom brought horses, to the number of two thousand, which made the most superb and beautiful spectacle that one could see at that time. Nevertheless, though young

and proud, and placed by fortune in so great an eminence, he had to admit that the magnificence of Lorenzo outshone his by a long way, since in the treasures of the Medici the value of the material was enhanced by the mastery and excellence of the workmanship, which, the more noble it is, the less common it is, and only to be acquired with difficulty and effort: and the things themselves more for their rarity than their costliness were to be regarded with amazement and wonder.

He had himself seen a great number of vases of stones which were precious and brought from distant lands, which his famous grandfather had after much time and with great expense and perseverance collected and brought together.

He regarded with great admiration the many pictures painted by the best masters, being by his own nature much attracted by them. A greater number of these he said he had seen in the palace of the Medici than in the whole of the rest of Italy; also of drawings, statues, and other works in marble, both by modern and ancient sculptors, of medals, jewels, books, and other rare things of great value compared with which he should estimate as of little worth large sums of gold and silver.

22. War with Volterra over the Alum Mines.

[Machiavelli: *Florentine History*, "Everyman" edition, pp. 304-307.]

Amid this profound peace a new and unexpected trouble arose in Tuscany. Alum mines had been discovered in Volterra, the value of which was well known to some citizens of that place, who in order to raise money for the development of the same had taken partners who were to share with them the advantages arising from the mines. Such was the beginning of the affair, and, as often happens in new enterprises, the mines were little valued; but when time showed the advantage of them to the people of Volterra, they began to agitate for the possession of what

they might have once had without any trouble. They brought the subject before the council, and stated that it was against public policy for an industry founded on public property to be worked for private advantage. The citizens also sent envoys to Florence to represent their views to the authorities there; by them it was referred to certain gentlemen for decision. Whether they were bribed by interested parties, or were only influenced by a desire for justice, it was adjudged that the people of Volterra had no right to deprive their citizens of the fruits of their foresight and industry, and therefore the alum mines belonged to private individuals and not to the public, but a certain payment should be made by the mines each year in recognition of the over-lordship of the state. This decision did not in any degree assuage but rather increased the animosities in Volterra, and the subject was violently discussed both in and out of the council chamber. The majority of the people urged the authorities to seize the mines, whilst it was only a few who had first acquired them who now desired them retained. When the judgment was confirmed a great disturbance was made in Volterra, in which a citizen of some repute, called Pecorino, and some others who supported him, were killed and their houses sacked and burnt; the Florentine governor was only saved from death with great difficulty.

The Volterrans, having flouted the people of Florence in this way, decided to send envoys to them informing the Signori that, if the Florentines were willing to observe their ancient treaties, the Volterrans for their part were willing to be bound by their ancient obligations. The reply to this message was much debated by the Signori. . . . An expedition was therefore determined upon, and the Volterrans were informed they were not in a position to demand the observance of ancient treaties, seeing they themselves had broken them; they must either submit to the judgment of the Signoria or prepare for war.

Immediately the Volterrans received this message they prepared for war by fortifying the town and sending to several princes of Italy for assistance; but few listened to them, only the Sienese and the Lord of Piombino gave any prospect of support. Knowing well that the effect of victory is enhanced by its swiftness, the Florentines sent 10,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry under the command of Federigo of Urbino into the districts round Volterra, which were quickly occupied. After this they approached the city, which being placed upon a hill could only be assaulted on the side near to the church of San Alessandro, the other sides being heavily fortified. The Volterrans had engaged about 1,000 soldiers in their defence, who were quite overawed when they saw the vigour with which the Florentines were pressing on their preparations for the attack; but however backward the soldiers might be in fighting the Florentines they were very ready in plundering the Volterrans. Thus the poor citizens, harassed by their foes from outside, plundered by their friends within, and despairing of safety, began to think of peace. No other course suggesting itself, they submitted to the commissioners; the gates were opened and the army admitted. The officers went direct to the palace where the signori were sitting and ordered them to return to their homes. On their way there one of the signori was set upon and robbed, and as men are always more ready for evil than for good this acted as a signal for the sack and destruction of the city. For a whole day it was overrun with riot, neither woman nor sacred place was spared, and the people were equally pillaged and wronged by the soldiery, whether of the attacking or defending army. The news of this victory was joyfully received in Florence, and as it had been the enterprise of Lorenzo he leapt at once into fame. One of his friends took upon himself to reprove Messer Tommaso Soderini for his advice, asking him, "What have you to say now that Volterra has been taken?" To which

Messer Tommaso replied, "It appears to me to have been lost, because if you had received it in peace, it would have been secure and profitable to you; but seeing that you will have to hold it by force, you will find it a source of loss and expense in time of peace and of anxiety and weakness in war."

23. Lorenzo's School of Sculpture.

[*Lives of the Artists*, by Giorgio Vasari. Translated by Mrs. Foster, in Bohn's Series, vol. ii., p. 482.]

In his youth he [Torrigiano] was taken by Lorenzo de' Medici the elder (Il Magnifico) into the garden which the latter possessed on the Piazza of San Marco in Florence, and which that magnificent citizen had decorated in the richest manner with figures from the antique and examples of the best sculptures. In the loggie, the walks, and all the buildings there were the noblest statues in marble, admirable works of the ancients, with pictures and other productions of art by the most eminent masters, whether of Italy or of other countries. All these treasures, to say nothing of the noble ornament they formed to the garden, were as a school or academy for the young painters and sculptors, as well as for all others devoted to the arts of design. . . . But men of genius were always protected by the magnificent Lorenzo, and more especially did he favour such of the nobles as he perceived to have an inclination for the study of art; and it is therefore no matter of astonishment that masters should have proceeded from this school, some of whom have awakened the surprise, as well as the admiration, of the world. And not only did Lorenzo provide the means of instruction, but also those of life for all who were too poor to pursue their studies without such aid; nay, he further supplied them with proper clothing, and even bestowed considerable presents on any one among them who had distinguished himself from his fellows by some well-executed design; all which

so encouraged the young students of our arts that, labouring in emulation of each other, many of them became excellent masters.

24. Visit of Poliziano to Cassandra Fidelis. Letter to Lorenzo de' Medici.

[Appendix 21, Roscoe's *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici*, edition 1851, p. 458.]

Magnificent Lorenzo,

I visited yesterday the famous and learned Cassandra Fedele and saluted her in your name, and certainly, Lorenzo, she is wonderful not only in her own language but in Latin, most wise, and to my eyes beautiful also.

I departed, amazed at her.

She thinks very highly of you and speaks of you constantly, as if she understood you intimately. At any rate, she will come one day to Florence to see you, so be prepared to do her honour.

Poliziano.

Venice, *June* 20, 1491.

25. Lorenzo de' Medici to his son Piero in Rome, November 26, 1484.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 261.]

. . . Thou wilt have a list of Sienese citizens to whom, if there is time, thou art to pay visits, using the same words I have already indicated and offering me to them, as well as to the three above-named, for the protection of their state, all the more that our city is of this mind.

When together with other youths of the ambassadors bear thyself sedately, politely, and kindly towards thy equals. Be careful not to take precedence of those who are thine elders, for although thou art my son thou art but a citizen of Florence, as they are. When Giovanni [Tornabuoni] thinks fit to present thee to the Pope privately first inform thyself well of all the needful

ceremonies, then when presented to His Sanctity kiss my letter which will be given thee for the Pope, entreating him to deign to read it. When it is thy turn to speak, first place me at the feet of His Beatitude, saying that I am aware it was my duty to prostrate myself in person at the feet of His Holiness, as I did at those of his Predecessor of saintly memory; but that I trust in his goodness to forgive me, because at that time I had my brother who was well able to fill my place, whereas at present I have no man of greater years and authority than thyself [*aged* 14], and therefore I do not think it would have been pleasing to His Holiness if I had left Florence. . . .

26. Matteo Franco to Ser Piero Dovizi da Bibbiena, Chancellor of Lorenzo de' Medici, wherever he may be.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 268.]

. . . And thus, till about two miles from Colle di Val d' Elsa, we continued singing, joking, and talking. Then we became almost dumb, for nearly all our words migrated into a brother of Antonio del Pela who came to meet us, and conducted us into a tumbledown and ruined village of Colle to a house of the said Antonio. He came forward with such a river and flood of words that he nearly drowned his brother, and us, and all who were near, and showed that he was truly the elder and the better brother. On entering the hall we found about thirty-five members of his family—girls, women, and children. My bore immediately began: "Madonna Clarice [*Lorenzo's wife*], this is my daughter, come forward, kiss the lady's hand; and this is my granddaughter, come forward, touch her gown. And this one, and this one. And these little ones are all my grandchildren; hold yourselves up, think of your manners; this one is to be a priest, this one a nun, to this one Madonna Lucrezia stood godmother, this one I have just given in marriage, this one makes Venetian fringe,

that one lace." Plague take him! If I had not pulled him away he would have cast a spell on us all. But by asserting how tired Madonna Clarice and we all were I managed to damp his ardour. We arrived about twenty-two or twenty-three of the clock, and after resting we went to see paper made and returned to fetch Madonna Clarice, who thought it a pretty thing, and was much interested in the machines, the water, the air, etc. Then we went back and supped about one of the clock: a few wafers, cakes and trebbiano, salad and pickles, boiled fowl and kid; and then young pigeons roasted, and I know not what preparation of fowl, marzipan, sweets, and comfits, etc. Before supper the commune of Colle made an offering to Madonna of corn, marzipan, wine, sweetmeats, etc. presented by eloquent orators three out of the number.

27. Lorenzo de' Medici to Giovanni Lanfredini, Florentine Ambassador at Rome.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 310.]

The Count della Mirandola is here leading a most saintly life, like a monk. He has been and is now occupied in writing admirable theological works: commentaries and Psalms, and other excellent works on theology. He recites the ordinary priest's office, observes all fasts and absolute chastity; has but a small retinue, and lives quite simply with only what is necessary. To me he appears an example to other men. He is anxious to be absolved from what little contumacy is still attributed to him by the Holy Father,[1] and to have a Brief by which His Holiness accepts him as a son and a good Christian, he persevering in a Christian life. I greatly desire that this satisfaction should be given to him, for there are few men I love better or esteem more. I feel certain that he is a devout and

[1] Pico della Mirandola had in 1486 published nine hundred theses theology, philosophy, magic, and the Cabbala. Against these Innocent VIII. issued a Brief.

faithful Christian, and his conduct is such that the whole city would vouch for him. Do all you can to obtain this Brief in such a form that it may content his conscience. This would be not less agreeable to me than any one of the many services you have rendered, and for which I am most grateful.

June 19, 1489.

28. Life of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, translated by Sir Thomas More, 1510.

Under the rule of governaunce of his mother he was set to maysters and to lernynge : where with so ardent mynde he labored the studyes of humanite, that within short whyle he was (and not without a cause) accompted among the chyef Oratours and Poetes of that time. . . .

As a desyrous enserchour of the secretes of nature he lefte these commyn trodn pathes and gave hym selfe hole to speculation and philosophy as well humane and devyne. For the purchasynge wherof (afte the maner of Plato and Apollonius) he scrupulously sought out all the famous doctours of his time visytynge studiously all the unyversytes and scoles not only through Italy, but also through Fraunce. . . .

For he was not of the condycion of some folke (which to be excellent in one thing set all other asyde) but he in all sciences profyted so excellently; that which of theym so ever he had consydered, in him ye wolde have thought that he had taken that one for his onely studye. And all these thynges were in him so much the more mervelouse in that he came thereto by hym selfe with the strength of his owne wytte for the love of God and profyte his chyrche, without maysters, so that we may saye of hym that Epycure the philosophre sayd of hym, that he was his owne mayster. . . .

To pore men alway yf ony came he plenteously gave out his money, and not content onely to gyve that he had

hym selfe redy: he wrote over it to one Hierom Benivenius a Florentin, and well letred man . . . that he sholde with his owne money ever helpe poore folke; and gyve maydens money to theyre maryage; and alway sende him worde what he had layde out that he myght pay hit him ageyn.

. . . What sorowe and hevynes his departyng out of this worlde was; both to rich and poor hygh and lowe: well testyfyeth the prynces of Italye, well wytnesseth the cities and people.

29. The Death of Lorenzo, described by Poliziano.

[*Letters of the Early Medici*, p. 337.]

. . . Then he devoted himself to consoling his son Piero, for the others were not there, and exhorted him to bear this law of necessity with courage, feeling sure that the aid of Heaven would be vouchsafed to him as it had been to himself in many and divers occasions, if he only acted wisely. Meanwhile your Lazarus, the doctor from Pavia, arrived, most learned as it seemed to me, but summoned too late to be of any use. Yet to do something he ordered various precious stones to be pounded together in a mortar for I know not what kind of medicine. Lorenzo thereupon asked the servants what the doctor was doing in his room and what he was preparing, and when I answered that he was composing a remedy to comfort his intestines he recognized my voice, and looking kindly as is his wont: "Oh, Angiolo!" he said, "art thou here?" and raising his languid arms took both my hands and pressed them tightly. I could not stifle my sobs or stay my tears though I tried to hide them by turning my face away. But he showed no emotion and continued to press my hands between his. When he saw that I could not speak for crying, quite naturally he loosened my hands, and I ran into the adjoining room where I could give free vent to my grief and to my tears. Then drying my eyes I returned, and as soon as he saw me he called me to him

and asked what Pico della Mirandola was doing. I replied that Pico had remained in town fearing to molest him with his presence. "And I," said Lorenzo, "but for the fear that the journey here might be irksome to him would be most glad to see him and speak to him for the last time before I leave you all." I asked if I should send for him. "Certainly, and with all speed," answered he. This I did, and Pico came and sat by the bed, whilst I leaned against his knees in order to hear the languid voice of my lord for the last time. With what goodness, with what courtesy, I may say with what caresses, Lorenzo received him. First he asked his pardon for thus disturbing him, begging him to regard it as a sign of the friendship—the love—he bore him, assuring him that he died more willingly after seeing so dear a friend. Then introducing, as was his wont, pleasant and familiar sayings, he joked also with us. "I wish," he said to Pico, "that death had spared me until your library had been complete." Pico had hardly left the room when Fra Girolamo [Savonarola] of Ferrara, a man celebrated for his doctrine and his sanctity and an excellent preacher, came in. To his exhortations to remain firm in his faith and to live in future, if God granted him life, free from crime, or if God so willed it to receive death willingly, Lorenzo answered that he was firm in his religion, that his life would always be guided by it, and that nothing could be sweeter to him than death, if such was the divine will. Fra Girolamo then turned to go, when Lorenzo said: "Oh, Father, before going deign to give me thy benediction." Bowing his head, immersed in piety and religion, he repeated the words and the prayers of the friar, without paying any attention to the grief now openly shown of his attendants. It seemed that all, save Lorenzo, were going to die, so calm was he. He gave no signs of anxiety or of sorrow; even in that supreme moment he showed his usual strength of mind and his fortitude. The doctors who stood round, not to seem

idle, worried him with their remedies and assistance. He submitted to everything they suggested, not because he thought it would save him, but in order not to offend anyone, even in death. To the last he had such mastery over himself that he joked about his own death. Thus when given something to eat and asked how he liked it, he replied, "As well as a dying man can like anything." He embraced us all tenderly and humbly asked pardon if during his illness he had caused annoyance to anyone. Then, disposing himself to receive extreme unction, he commended his soul to God. . . .

FIESOLE, *May* 18, 1492.

30. THE POSITION OF FLORENCE AT THE DEATH OF LORENZO.

[GUICCIARDINI: *Opere inedite*, vol. iii., p. 82.]

The city was in a state of profound peace, and the governing classes of the citizens were so united and so closely knit together and their power was so firmly established that no man dared to question it. The people were kept amused every day by shows, festivals, and novelties. They were well fed from the provisions with which the city abounded. Industry of every sort flourished. Talented and able men were maintained, and a welcome and a position secured to all teachers of literature, art, and every liberal pursuit. And lastly the city was not only in a state of perfect peace and quietness within the walls, but it was glorious abroad and enjoyed a high reputation because it had a strong government and a man of great authority at the head of it, also because it had recently increased its territory. It had been in great part the cause first of the salvation of Ferrara and afterwards of King Ferdinand. It had paramount influence with Pope Innocent. It was allied with Naples and with Milan, and in fact held almost the balancing power of all Italy. Then occurred an unforeseen incident which turned every-

thing upside down with disastrous results, not only to the city but to all Italy.

And that was that in the year 1492 Lorenzo de' Medici, who had been ill a long time and whose illness the doctors did not think of much importance, but one which could be cured with care, whereas it had been always growing worse, at last in April passed out of this present life.

31. Buonaccorso Pitti's Account of Journeys to Paris in 1395.

[Buonaccorso Pitti: *Cronica*. Bologna, 1905. P. 99.]

They elected as ambassadors Messer Vanni Chastellani, Messer Filippo Corsini—at that time a doctor—and myself, to be sent to France, and the Signoria requested me to go there at once. I started on the 15th of January, taking the road by Friuli and through Germany. I spent thirty-four days on that part of the journey, amid the snow, going over the top of a mountain called Arlberg. I got through then only by the help of the men who dug away the snow, and of the oxen also, and thus made a way through. I reached Constance, and then Bâle, Langres, and finally Paris. . . .

We decided that I should return [to Florence] and I travelled by way of Burgundy and Germany and descended to Friuli. Having arrived at Treviso, I heard that our ambassadors from Florence were at Venice with the Lord of Padua and other ambassadors of the League. I took two horses and a carriage, and all my other horses and my household except one servant I sent to Padua. I myself went to Venice. . . . I left there on the 22nd of March at nine o'clock at night and rested at Mestre, and was at Padua at two o'clock in the morning. On the 23rd I set out early and with two riding horses belonging to the Lord of Padua, and without eating or drinking, I reached Ferrara at eight o'clock that evening. Here I hired two of

the marquis's horses and went on to San Giorgio, within ten miles of Bologna, to sleep. In the morning before sunrise I went to Bologna, and taking two hacks and a carriage I reached Scharperia late at night. I arrived in Florence early on the morning of March 25th; thus in two days and a third I had come from Padua to Florence, having ridden from Paris to Padua in sixteen days.

32. Letter of Amerigo Vespucci[1] to Pier Soderini, Gonfalonier of the Republic of Florence.

[*The First Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci.* Bernard Quaritch, London, 1893.]

The chief cause which moved [*me*] to write to you, was by the request of the present bearer, who is named Benvenuto Benvenuti our Florentine [*fellow citizen*], very much, as it is proven, your Magnificence's servant, and my very good friend: who happening to be here in this city of Lisbon, begged that I should make communication to your Magnificence of the things seen by me in divers regions of the world, by virtue of four voyages which I have made in discovery of new lands: two by order of the King of Castile,[2] King Don Ferrando VI., across the great gulph of the Ocean-sea towards the west: and the other two by command of the puissant King Don Manuel King of Portugal, towards the south: Telling me that your Magnificence would take pleasure thereof, and that herein he hoped to do you service: wherefore I set me to do it: because I am assured that your Magnificence holds me in

[1] Amerigo Vespucci, born in Florence, 1451. Became Cadiz agent of the Medici Company in 1492. He was enrolled a member of the Guild of Doctors and Apothecaries in 1497; sailed to the New World 1497, 1499, 1501, 1503. Died 1512. The *Lettera di Amerigo Vespucci delle Isole nuovamente trovate in quattro Suoi Viaggi* give an account of his voyages.

[2] This lack of precision with regard to Ferdinand's title may be compared with similar carelessness on the early maps which refer to America.

the number of your servants, remembering that in the time of our youth I was your friend, and now [*am your*] servant: and [*remembering our*] going to hear the rudiments of grammar under the fair example and instruction of the venerable monk friar of Saint Mark Fra Giorgio Antonio Vespucci: whose counsels and teaching would to God that I had followed: for as saith Petrarch, I should be another man than what I am. . . . As I said above, we left the port of Cadiz four consort ships[1]: and began our voyage in a direct course to the Fortunate Isles, which are called to-day *la gran Canaria*, . . . and so we sailed on till at the end of 37[2] days we reached a land which we deemed to be a continent: . . . and we put out our boats freighted with men and arms: we made towards the land, and before we reached it, had sight of a great number of people who were going along the shore: by which we were much rejoiced. . . . They are of medium stature, very well proportioned: their flesh is of a colour that verges into red like a lion's mane: and I believe that if they went clothed, they would be as white as we: they have not any hair upon the body, except the hair of the head which is long and black, and especially in the women, whom it renders handsome: . . . they are very light-footed in walking and in running, as well the men as the women: so that a woman recks nothing of running a league or two, as many times we saw them do: and herein they have a very great advantage over us Christians: they swim [*with an expertness*] beyond all belief, and the women better than the men: for we have many times found and seen them swimming two leagues out at sea without any thing to rest upon. . . . When they go to war, they take their women with them not that these may fight, but because they carry behind them their worldly goods: for a woman carries on her back for thirty or forty leagues a load which no man could bear: as we have many times seen them do. . . . Many tribes came to

[1] *Navi di conserva.* [2] The Latin has 27⅔.

see us, and wondered at our faces and our whiteness: and they asked us whence we came: and we gave them to understand that we had come from heaven, and that we were going to see the world, and they believed it. In this land we placed baptismal fonts, and an infinite [*number of*] people were baptized, and they called us in their language Carabi, which means men of great wisdom. We took our departure from that port: and the province is called Lariab: . . . We had now been thirteen months on the voyage: and the vessels and the tackling were already much damaged, and the men worn out by fatigue: we decided by general council to haul our ships on land and examine them for the purpose of stanching leaks,[1] as they made much water, and of caulking and tarring them afresh, and [*then*] returning towards Spain: and when we came to this determination, we were close to a harbour the best in the world: into which we entered with our vessels: where we found an immense number of people: who received us with much friendliness: . . . and [*now*] desiring to depart upon our voyage, they made complaint to us how at certain times of the year there came from over the sea to this their land, a race of people very cruel, and enemies of theirs: . . . and so piteously did they tell us this that we believed them: and we promised to avenge them of so much wrong: . . . and at the end of the seven days we came upon the islands, which were many, some [*of them*] inhabited, and others deserted: and we anchored at one of them: where we saw a numerous people who called it Iti: and having manned our boats with strong crews, and [*taken*] three guns in each, we made for land: . . . and having armed ourselves as best we could, we advanced towards the shore, and they sought not to hinder us from landing, I believe from fear of the cannons: and we jumped on land, 57 men in four squadrons, each one [*consisting of*] a captain and his company: and we came to

[1] *Stancharle* (? *stagnarle*).

blows with them: and after a long battle [*in which*] many of them [*were*] slain, we put them to flight, and pursued them to a village, having made about 250 of them captives, and we burnt the village, and returned to our ships with victory and 250 prisoners[1] leaving many of them dead and wounded, and of ours there were no more than one killed, and 22 wounded, who all escaped [*i.e., recovered*], God be thanked. We arranged our departure, and the seven men, of whom five were wounded, took an island-canoe, and, with seven prisoners that we gave them, four women and three men, returned to their [*own*] country full of gladness, wondering at our strength: and we thereupon made sail for Spain with 222 captive slaves: and reached the port of Cadiz on the 15 day of October 1498, where we were well received and sold our slaves. Such is what befel me, most noteworthy, in this my first voyage.

33. Michelangelo Buonarroti.

[Vasari: *Lives of Italian Painters.* Selected and prefaced by Havelock Ellis, pp. 257-258, 275-276.]

. . . Having a true love for art, Lorenzo grieved that in his time there should be found no great and noble sculptors who could take rank with the many painters of high fame and merit then existing, and he resolved, as I have said, to form a School. To this end he requested Domenico Ghirlandajo to send to the garden any youth whom he might find disposed to the study of sculpture, when Lorenzo promised to provide for his progress, hoping thus

[1] Varnhagen thought we ought to read "25" (not 250), like the Latin version, and to correct the figures "222" lower down into "22," in both the text and the Latin. But he was in error, having omitted to observe that the figures "250" occur *twice*. He evidently looked more on the Latin than the text. Besides, a capture of only 25 savages would be very little indeed for the European force to make, whether we reckon it at 57 men or 228 men, as he and the Latinizer read it (four squadrons, each of 57 men, with its captain), especially when they had entered into hostilities with the express intention of making captives. [He afterwards corrected himself.]

to create, so to speak, such artists as should do honour to his city.

By Domenico, therefore, were presented to him among others, Michelagnolo and Francesco Granacci, as excellent for this purpose. They went to the garden accordingly, and found there Torrigiano, a youth of the Torrigiani family, who was executing in terra certain figures in full relief which Bertoldo had given him. Seeing this, and aroused to emulation, Michelagnolo began to attempt the same; when Lorenzo, perceiving his fine abilities, conceived great hope of his future success, and he, much encouraged, took a piece of marble, after having been there but a few days, and set himself to copy the head of an old Faun from the antique. The nose of the original was much injured, the mouth was represented laughing, and this Michelagnolo, who had never before touched chisel or marble, did in fact copy in such a manner, that the Magnifico was utterly amazed. . . .

He sent for Ludovico, therefore, requesting the latter to entrust the youth to his care, and saying that he would treat him as a son of his own, to which Ludovico consented gladly; when Lorenzo gave orders that a room in his own house should be prepared for Michelagnolo, and caused him to eat at his own table with his sons and other persons of worth and quality. This was the second year of Michelagnolo's engagement to Domenico, and when the youth was fifteen or sixteen years old; he remained in the house of Lorenzo the Magnificent four years, to the death of Lorenzo namely, which took place in 1492. During all this time Michelagnolo received from the Magnifico an allowance of five ducats per month, and was furthermore presented for his gratification with a violet-coloured mantle; his father, likewise, had an office in the Customs conferred on him. . . .

Michelagnolo worked for his amusement almost every day at the group of four figures, of which I have before

made mention; but he broke up the block at last, either because it was found to have numerous veins, was excessively hard, and often caused the chisel to strike fire, or because the judgment of this artist was so severe, that he could never content himself with anything that he did, a truth of which there is proof in the fact that few of his works, undertaken in manhood, were ever completed, those entirely finished having been the productions of his youth. Such for example were the Bacchus, the Pietà of the Madonna della Febbre, the Colossal Statue at Florence, and the Christ of the Minerva, which are finished to such perfection, that a single grain could not be taken from them without injury; while the Statues of the Dukes Giuliano and Lorenzo, with those of Night, Aaron, Moses, and the two figures belonging to the latter, altogether not amounting to eleven statues, have still remained incomplete. The same may be said of many others; indeed, Michelagnolo would often remark, that if he were compelled really to satisfy himself in the works to be produced, he should give little or nothing to public view. And the reason of this is obvious, he had proceeded to such an extent of knowledge in art, that the very slightest error could not exist in any figure without his immediate discovery thereof; but having found such after the work had been given to view, he would never attempt to correct it, and would commence some other production, believing that the like failure would not happen again; this then was, as he often declared, the cause wherefore the number of pictures and statues finished by his hand was so small.

34. Vittoria Colonna, Marchesa di Pescara, and Michelangelo.

[Condivi: *Vita di Michelagnolo Buonarroti*, edition 1553, p. 45.]

. . . And in particular he deeply loved the Marchesa di Pescara, whose divine spirit was beloved by him, and by whom he was in turn dearly loved. This love is shown in

many letters, full of true and chivalrous devotion, which he poured forth from his heart. He also wrote sonnets to her full of beauty and longing.

They met many times at Viterbo and other places where she went for pleasure or to pass the summer, and at Rome, where she went for no other reason than to see Michelangelo.

He had for her such love that I remember hearing him say that nothing gave him more pain than to think that when he went to see her as she passed out of this life he did not kiss her forehead nor her face as he had kissed her hand. Her death stunned him for a long time; indeed he seemed to have lost all power of feeling. He made at her request a nude Christ, who, taken from the cross, would, like a dead body, have fallen at the feet of His Holy Mother, had not two angels held Him up by the arms.

[Letter of MICHELANGELO to Fattucci, quoted in *Life of Michelangelo*, by Romain Rolland.]

I possess a little parchment book which she gave me some ten years ago. It contains one hundred and three sonnets ("Spiritual Sonnets" by Vittoria Colonna) without counting the forty on paper which she sent me from Viterbo, and which I have had bound in the same little book. . . . I have also many letters which she wrote me from Orvieto and Viterbo. That is what I possess of her.

35. DRAFT OF A LETTER WRITTEN BY LEONARDO DA VINCI TO LUDOVICO, DUKE OF MILAN.

[Quoted by EDWARD MACCURDY in *Leonardo da Vinci*, pp. 9-11.]

I can noiselessly construct to any prescribed point subterranean passages either straight or winding, passing if necessary underneath trenches or a river.

I can make armoured wagons carrying artillery which shall break through the most serried ranks of the enemy, and so open a safe passage for the infantry. . . .

. . . In time of peace I believe that I can give you as complete satisfaction as any one else in the construction of buildings both public and private and in conducting water from one place to another. I can further execute sculpture in marble, bronze, or clay. Also in painting I can do as much as anyone else whoever he may be.

Moreover, I would undertake the commission of the bronze horse, which shall endure with immortal glory and eternal honour the auspicious memory of your father and of the illustrious house of Sforza.

36. Leonardo da Vinci.

[Vasari: *Lives of Italian Painters.* Selected and prefaced by Havelock Ellis, pp. 118-124.]

The richest gifts are seen to be showered by celestial influence on certain human beings, sometimes supernaturally and marvellously congregating in one sole person; beauty, grace, and talent being united in such a manner, that to whatever such a man may turn, his every action is so divine as to leave all other men far behind him, and manifestly to prove that he has been endowed by God, and not by human teaching. This was seen in Leonardo da Vinci, in whom, beside his beauty of person, which has never been sufficiently extolled, there was more than infinite grace in all his actions, and who had besides so rare ability, that to whatever subject he turned, however difficult, he easily made himself absolute master of it. Extraordinary power was in his case conjoined with remarkable facility, a mind of regal boldness and magnanimous daring; his fame extended so widely that he was held in high estimation, not in his own time only, but also to a greater extent after his death. . . .

On the death of Giovanni Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, in the year 1493, Ludovico Sforza was chosen in the same year to be his successor, when Leonardo was invited with great honour to Milan by the Duke, who delighted greatly

in the music of the lute. to the end that the master might play before him; Leonardo therefore took with him a certain instrument which he had himself constructed almost wholly of silver, and in the shape of a horse's head, a new and fanciful form calculated to give more force and sweetness to the sound. Here Leonardo surpassed all the musicians who had assembled to perform before the Duke; he was besides one of the best *improvisatori* in verse existing at that time, and the Duke, enchanted with the admirable conversation of Leonardo, was so charmed by his varied gifts that he delighted beyond measure in his society, and prevailed on him to paint an altar-piece, the subject of which was the Nativity of Christ, which was sent by the Duke as a present to the Emperor. For the Dominican monks of Santa Maria delle Grazie at Milan he also painted a Last Supper, which is a most beautiful and admirable work; to the heads of the Apostles in this picture the master gave so much beauty and majesty that he was constrained to leave that of Christ unfinished, being convinced that he could not impart to it the divinity which should distinguish an image of Christ.[1]

37. Leonardo da Vinci's Notebooks.

[Edward MacCurdy, London, 1906.]

Thou, O God, dost sell unto us all good things at the price of labour (p. 47).

Whoever in discussion adduces authority uses not intellect, but rather memory (p. 54).

Fable (p. 259).

A stone of considerable size, only recently left uncovered by the waters, stood in a certain spot, perched up at the edge of a delightful copse, above a stony road, surrounded by plants bright with various flowers of different colours

[1] This head, on the contrary, seems admirably finished, notwithstanding the ruined condition of the work to-day.

and looked upon the great mass of stones which lay heaped together in the road beneath, and she became filled with longing to let herself down there, saying within herself: "What am I doing here with these plants? I would fain dwell in the company of my sisters yonder"; and so letting herself fall she ended her rapid course among her desired companions. But when she had been there for a short time she found herself in continual distress from the wheels of the carts, the iron hoofs of the horses, and the feet of the passers-by. One rolled her over, another trampled upon her; and at times she raised herself up a little as she lay covered with mud or the dung of some animal, and vainly looked up at the place from whence she had departed as a place of solitude and quiet peace.

So it happens to those who, leaving the life of solitude and contemplation, choose to come and dwell in cities among people full of infinite wickedness.

38. Benedetto Dei's Letter to Venetians, 1472.

[Benedetto Dei: *Cronica*, in Pagnini's *Della Decima*, vol. ii., p. 240.]

We have two crafts worthier and greater than any four in your city of Venice, and they are wool and silk. Evidence of this is given by the Courts of Rome and of the King of Naples, by the Marches, Sicily, Constantinople, Rhodes, Scio, Pera, Broussa, Gallipoli, Salonica, Adrianople, and other places to which the Florentines send their cloth and where they have banks, houses, shops, merchants, and consuls, Florentine churches—to your contempt and shame.

As to cloths of silk and gold brocade, ribbons of silver and of all other kinds, of these they have made, do and will make more than as much as your city of Venice, Genoa, and Lucca make all together.

That this is true your merchants and others can testify who come to Lyons and into France, to Bruges, London,

Antwerp, Avignon, Geneva, into Provence, and to Marseilles, in all of which places we have flourishing banks and exchanges, worthy merchants, princely shops and houses, well-built residences, churches and consuls and rich dresses, such as your people have when they go annually to the fairs.

39. Florence in 1472.

[Benedetto Dei: *Cronica*, in Pagnini's *Della Decima*, vol. ii., p. 275.]

Florence the beautiful has 270 workshops belonging to the Guild of Wool within the city. . . . They make cloth for Rome, Florence, Sicily, Naples, etc. There are 83 shops of the Guild of Silk. Splendid stuffs of great price are made, and cloth of silk, gold brocade, damask, velvet, satin, taffeta for Rome, Naples, Catalonia, Spain, Seville, Turkey, and for the fairs of the Marches and Genoa, and for Barbary, Avignon, London, Antwerp, Lyons, Montpellier, Florence, Ferrara, Mantua, and all Italy. . . .

Florence the beautiful has 66 shops of the apothecaries and 84 carpenters—inlaid-wood workers' and carvers' shops—and 54 shops of stone-cutters—marble and granite . . . and 70 butchers' shops within the city and 8 poulterers' and game shops . . . 30 shops of silver beaters, silver thread makers and famous makers of wax figures . . . also 44 goldsmith's shops, silversmiths and jewellers within the city.

40. Savonarola's Letter to his Father on becoming a Monk, 1475.

[*Alcune lettere di Fra Girolamo Savonarola*, Firenze, 1858.]

Honoured Father,

I do not doubt that you have suffered enough over my departure, and the more because I went away from you secretly. But I would fain make you understand my

mind and my will by this letter so that you may be comforted and that you may understand that I did not act childishly, as some think. . . .

First, the reason which moved me to enter the religious life was this. First the great misery of the world, the wickedness of men, the immorality, the robberies, the pride, the idolatry, the dreadful cruelties that this age has come to, so that no one can be found who does good. . . . Answer me this, is it not great virtue in a man to fly the defilements and wickedness of this miserable world, that he may live as a rational being and not as a beast among the swine? And would it not have been great ingratitude in me to have prayed God to show me the right path in which to walk and afterwards, when He had deigned to show it me, not to have accepted it? . . .

So, dearest father, you should rather thank the Lord Jesus than weep that he has given you a son and that you have kept him well enough to his twenty-second year, and not only that, but that He has deigned to make him His knight. Oh! do you not think yourself honoured enough to have a son a knight of Jesus Christ? . . . I shall not cease to pray you that you, being strong, shall comfort my mother, and I pray you both to give me your blessing and I will always pray fervently for your souls. . . .

HIERONYMUS SAVONAROLA,
Your son.

41. THE CATHEDRAL SERMONS.

[BURLAMACCHI: *Vita di Savonarola*, edition 1761, p. 85.]

There came always bands of people to hear the sermons and from the rugged mountain sides there rode in the country people, and all night long they travelled to Florence, so that in the morning when the door opened a great crowd entered, all going straight in to take their places. And there were not wanting rich citizens, full of

charity, who had the goodness to give them food and drink and lodging; they took into their houses as many as twenty or thirty or forty strangers at a time, of those who had come to the sermon. They went out spontaneously and invited them, competing with one another to do so: they met them at the gate of the city, so that it seemed like the time of the primitive Church. . . . At the door of the cathedral the people, waiting till it should be open, made no account of any inconvenience, neither of the cold, nor of the wind, nor of standing in winter with their feet on the marble. Among them were old and young, women and children, of every sort, who came with such joy and gladness that it was wonderful to hear them, going to the sermon as to a wedding. Inside the church the silence was great, each one going to his place; those who could read, with a taper in their hand, said the office, and others said other prayers; and though there were many thousands of people all together, you would not even hear a "hush" until the arrival of the children, who sang hymns with so much sweetness that heaven seemed to have opened. So they waited three or four hours till the Father [Savonarola] entered the pulpit, and the attention which you saw in this great mass of people was marvellous, all with eyes and ears intent on the preacher, without weariness, so that when the sermon was ended it seemed to them it had scarcely begun.

Sermon on the Wednesday before Palm Sunday, 1496.

I hear that the officers of the Monte di Pietà have been elected. . . . The children shall march in procession in honour of this.

42. The Procession.

[Burlamacchi: *Vita di Savonarola*, p. 119.]

First having heard Mass, all communicated, and with palms in their hands went to the sermon in the cathedral,

at which the children assembled in such multitudes that they occupied that morning all the four parts of the galleries (round the walls).

When it was over they all went to the church of the Annunziata, from there they set out and went to the door of the first cloister of St. Mark's; entering through the cloister they came to the church, where they gave to each a red cross. Leaving St. Mark's, they went by the Via Larga to St. John's, where they went in, in pairs, grouped according to their quarters in the town. The procession was followed humbly and devotedly by the bearers of the tabernacle, whereon was painted the Saviour, seated on the ass and surrounded by many people, who strewed their garments on the ground, and it seemed as if they sang in a loud voice, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Facing it there was a painting of a Virgin of marvellous beauty with the crown which was presented to her by the Father [Savonarola] when he went as ambassador [to the King of France], and the crown was borne up by angels. After the tabernacle came many pairs of children in the guise of most beautiful angels, who seemed to have come out of Paradise. There were eight thousand of them, and it was a marvellous thing, taking into account their order, the distance they walked, their silence. Thus they marched, singing psalms with great fervour and spirit and saying the office.

Many of them carried dishes in their hands in which to receive alms for the Monte de Pietà (Public Loan Offices). After the children walked in order the monks, and then the clergy, followed by a large number of men (seculars), with the red crosses and an olive-branch in their hands. Then came the girls dressed in white with garlands on their heads, and at the end all the women.

So great was the zeal that day that not only children and women, but even grave and noble men, full of wisdom and prudence, forgetting this worldly wisdom, robed

themselves in white like the children, and danced and sang before the tabernacle of the Saviour as did David before the Ark. Despising the world's pomps, they held the olive-branches and red crosses in their hands, and they shouted ceaselessly, in high voices like the children, "Long live Christ, our King." And there was such joy in their hearts that it seemed as if the glory of Paradise had descended to earth; and many tears of joy and devotion were shed. They came in this manner to the Piazza di Signoria, where they sang some verses in honour of the day by Girolamo Benevieni, one of which begins:

"Live long in our hearts, long live Fiorenza [Florence]."

And from the piazza (square), still singing and rejoicing, they went round the city, coming at last to the cathedral church of St. Mary of the Flowers. They entered and offered to God their hearts and spirits, committing to Him the city, and offering all the alms, which they had received in large quantities for the Monte di Pietà. Not only were the children's dishes full of money, rings, jewels, and other precious things, but also many other dishes, which were placed on an altar of marvellous grandeur, which stood under the cupola of the church, where there was much valuable clothing and a large quantity of gold and silver. With this money there were established four Monti di Pietà, one for each quarter of the city. This was the means of turning out the Jews who lent money on usury in the city. When these offerings and thanksgiving to God had been made, they returned to the Piazza of St. Mark, where all the monks came out of the convent without hoods and wearing the alb and crowned with garlands. They formed a round dance through the square, singing psalms, thinking nothing of appearances, and the sweetness of their singing caused everyone to dissolve into tears of happiness.

And afterwards all went home much edified. It was

in truth a wonderful day, full of joy and exultation, during which everyone seemed almost driven mad by love for Christ, and Florence was by this mystery become a new Jerusalem.

43. Charles VIII. in Florence, 1494.

[Guicciardini: *Opere inedite, Storia Fiorentina*, vol. iii., p. 118.]

Things remained in this state of unrest for days and the city was in terror, as was natural to people not accustomed to arms, when they saw in their midst a powerful army.

On the other hand, the French, seeing the people were numerous and hearing how at the expulsion of Piero they had at the sound of the great bell all taken up their arms, and that the people of the surrounding district would all have done the same, were also somewhat afraid. They mounted guard and took great care that the bells were not rung, so their fear was lessened; and although two or three times rumours sprang up as it were from the ground, and the French rushed to arms, nevertheless the rumours were born of fear, and nothing came of them. Francesco Valori, Piero Capponi, Biaccio Martelli, and several other citizens were deputed to confer with the king, and having agreed as to the terms, they took to the king a draft of those terms the city would agree to, and this not pleasing him, he made another draft in accordance with which he was willing to come to an agreement. Then because much of it was disgraceful, Piero Capponi took it and most courageously tore it to pieces before the king's eyes, replying that since he would not agree things would be settled in another way, and that if he sounded his trumpets they would sound their bells; surely words of a great and courageous man, for he was in the house of a King of France, who was barbarous and arrogant, where there was danger that savage deeds would follow on angry words. The king and his followers were alarmed seeing such spirit and full of doubt already because of the number

of the people and because of the great bell, at the sound of which they were sure that from the city and surrounding district armed men to the number of over 30,000 would rush violently out, so that, it is thought, through such threats they abandoned the most shameful terms, and drew up more reasonable conditions. Finally, after much discussion they came to an agreement with him on November 25, 1494. It was sworn to at Santa Reparata in the presence of the King, the Signoria, and all the people, he swearing personally on the sacred stone of the high altar to observe these terms.

They pledged themselves to friendship and peace, a federation and league between the King of France and ourselves, following the general form of other leagues, friendship for friendship, foe for foe, on condition that the city paid, for damages and losses to King Charles, 120,000 gold ducats, of which he was to have 50,000 before leaving the city, and the other 70,000 in two payments within certain limits of time, diverse but short.

The king should hold for security during the war and his expedition into the kingdom of Naples the fortresses of Pisa, Leghorn, Pietra Santa, and Lerezania, leaving, however, the government and the revenues of the inhabitants of these places to the Florentines, as was the case before his coming; the undertaking in Naples being finished, he would be obliged to restore them freely and without any exception.

44. The Seizure of Savonarola in the Convent, 1498.

[Burlamacchi: *Vita di Savonarola*, p. 151.]

He confessed to Fra Domenico da Pescia and took the communion in the first library. Fra Domenico did the same. Afterwards, having eaten a little food, he was somewhat refreshed, and spoke his last words to the

brothers, exhorting them to stand fast in their religion, and kissing them all, took leave of them. As he was going one of his sons said to him, "Father, why do you abandon us and leave us thus desolate?" To which he replied, "My son, have patience. God will help you," and added that if he lived he would see them again. or after death he would see them anyhow. As he went he gave the keys to the brothers, with such humility and affection that they could not restrain their tears, and many of them wanted in any case to go with him. At last, urging them to return to their prayers, he went towards the door of the library, where the first commissaries, fully armed, awaited him. He gave himself into their hands like the gentlest lamb, saying, "I leave to your care this my flock and all these other citizens." When he was in the corridor of the library, he said, "My brothers, do not fall into doubt. God will not fail to make His work perfect. Though I may be dead, I shall help you more than I have in life, and I shall come in some way to comfort you whether I be living or dead." As he took the holy water, which was at the entrance of the choir, Father Domenico said to him, "I, too, would go to this marriage feast." Some of his lay friends at the request of the Signoria surrounded him. When Fra Girolamo was in the first cloister Fra Benedetto, the miniature painter, begged to be allowed to go with him; pushing back the commissaries, he implored permission. But Fra Girolamo turned to him, saying, "Fra Benedetto, for the sake of holy obedience do not come. I and Fra Domenico have to die for the love of Christ." At this he was snatched away from the eyes of his sons, who wept at the parting,

It was already nine o'clock. Coming out of the convent the tumult was so great and the hooting of the people so loud that many thought he had been killed immediately by his enemies, but those who were conducting him made

a fence of shields and spears round his head, so that he was neither killed nor wounded. They could not, however, avoid the insults, the mockery, the many blows, the kicks which all along the road he suffered, walking with his hands bound behind him like some criminal. One wretched creature twisted his fingers with great violence, but Andrea de' Medici, one of the commissaries who were taking him to the palace, seeing this, freed him from the man.

45. Sandro Botticelli.

[Vasari: *Lives of Italian Painters.* Selected and prefaced by Havelock Ellis, pp. 102-104.]

In the same time with the illustrious Lorenzo de' Medici the elder, which was truly an age of gold for men of talent, there flourished a certain Alessandro, called after our custom Sandro, and further named Di Botticelli. . . .

There was at that time a close connection and almost constant intercourse between the goldsmiths and the painters, wherefore Sandro, who possessed considerable ingenuity, and was strongly disposed to the arts of design, became enamoured of painting, and resolved to devote himself entirely to that vocation. . . .

Pope Sixtus IV., having erected the chapel built by him in his place at Rome, and desiring to have it adorned with paintings, commanded that Sandro Botticelli should be appointed superintendent of the work. He accordingly executed various pictures there. By these works Botticelli obtained great honour and reputation among the many competitors who were labouring with him, whether Florentines or natives of other cities, and received from the Pope a considerable sum of money; but this he consumed and squandered totally, during his residence in Rome, where he lived without due care, as was his habit. Having completed the work assigned to him, he returned at once to Florence, where, being whimsical and eccentric,

he occupied himself by commenting on a certain part of Dante, illustrating the *Inferno*, and executing prints, over which he wasted much time, and, neglecting his proper occupation, he did no work, and thereby caused infinite disorder in his affairs. He likewise engraved many of the designs he had executed, but in a very inferior manner, the work being badly cut. The best attempt of this kind from his hand is the Triumph of Faith, by Fra Girolamo Savonarola, of Ferrara, of whose sect our artist was so zealous a partisan that he totally abandoned painting, and not having any other means of living, he fell into very great difficulties. But his attachment to the party he had adopted increased; he became what was then called a *Piagnone*, and abandoned all labour, insomuch that, finding himself at length become old, being also very poor, he must have died of hunger had he not been supported by Lorenzo de' Medici, for whom he had worked at the small hospital of Volterra and other places, who assisted him while he lived, as did other friends and admirers of his talents. . . .

EVENTS IN FLORENTINE HISTORY, 1400-1500.

1402. Death of Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan.
1406. Surrender of Pisa to Florence.
1409. War between France and Naples.
1411. Establishment of two new Florentine Councils, to which questions of peace and war must be submitted.
1417. Outbreak of plague in Florence. Pope Martin V. elected: his reception at Florence.
1421. Leghorn bought by Florence.
1421–7. War with the Visconti.
1427. New system of taxation in Florence (the *Catasto*).
1429. Siege of Lucca.
1433. Arrest and exile of Cosimo de' Medici.
1434. Recall of Cosimo.
1439. Council of the Church met at Florence.
1440. League against the Visconti.
1450. Capture of Milan by Francesco Sforza.
1457. Death of Neri Capponi (opponent of Cosimo).
1464. Death of Cosimo de' Medici.
1464. Piero di Cosimo de' Medici (Il Gottoso).
1466. The party of the Mountain (anti-Medicean) crushed.
1469. Death of Piero.
1471. Council appointed to control composition of Signoria and the One Hundred.
1478. Pazzi conspiracy.
1479. Lorenzo de' Medici goes to Naples.
1480. The Council of Seventy created.
1491. Savonarola, Prior of St. Mark's.
1492. Giuliano de' Medici proclaimed Cardinal.
1492. Death of Lorenzo de' Medici.
1494. Flight of Piero de' Medici. Charles VIII. of France in Florence.
1495. Changes in Florentine Constitution.
1498. Execution of Savonarola.

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